



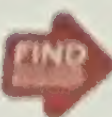
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# CLAUDE

Best in Show

*Alex T Smith*

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

I celebrated World Book Day 2019 with  
this gift from my local bookseller and  
Hodder Children's Books.

#ShareAStory



Claude is a dog.  
Claude is a small dog.  
Claude is a small, plump dog.

Claude is a small, plump dog who likes  
wearing a beret and a lovely red jumper.

Claude lives with his owners  
Mr and Mrs Shinyshoes and his  
best friend Sir Bobblysock.

Every day, when Mr and Mrs  
Shinyshoes go out to work, Claude  
and Sir Bobblysock get ready  
to have an adventure.

Where will they go today?

# CLAUDE

Best in Show



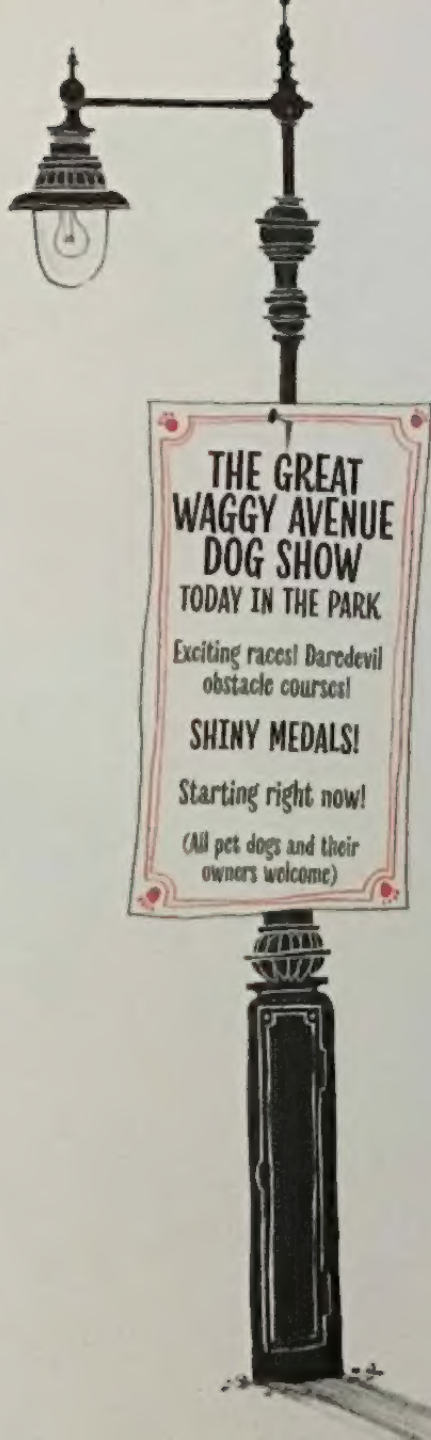
Alex T. Smith





**I**t was a sunny morning, and Claude and Sir Bobblysock were busy promenading down Waggy Avenue.

Suddenly, they saw something Very Interesting Indeed.



Well, there wasn't one bit of the sign that didn't get Claude's eyebrows waggling.

Sir Bobblysock was excited too. A nice, bright, shiny medal would look lovely on his knick-knack shelf, next to his ornament collection.



'I'd wear my medal on my jumper!' said Claude, doing quite a hearty lunge.

'Oh no!' he cried, suddenly disappointed. 'We can't take part in the competition. You need to have a pet dog and we don't have one!' Claude scratched one of his long, floppy ears thoughtfully.

'In fact,' he continued, picking a piece of fluff from his tail, 'we don't know any dogs at all. Not even one!'

Now, that WAS a problem.





Sir Bobblysock was just going to say something quite important, when Claude had an idea.

A collection of various objects, including a black bottle, a red polka-dot cone, a roll of paper, a red and white striped mask, a red boot, a small potted plant, and a red and white striped mask, scattered on a light background.

Like it? Sir Bobblysock LIVED for dressing up. So he didn't say his quite important thing, and let Claude carry on with his Very Clever Idea.



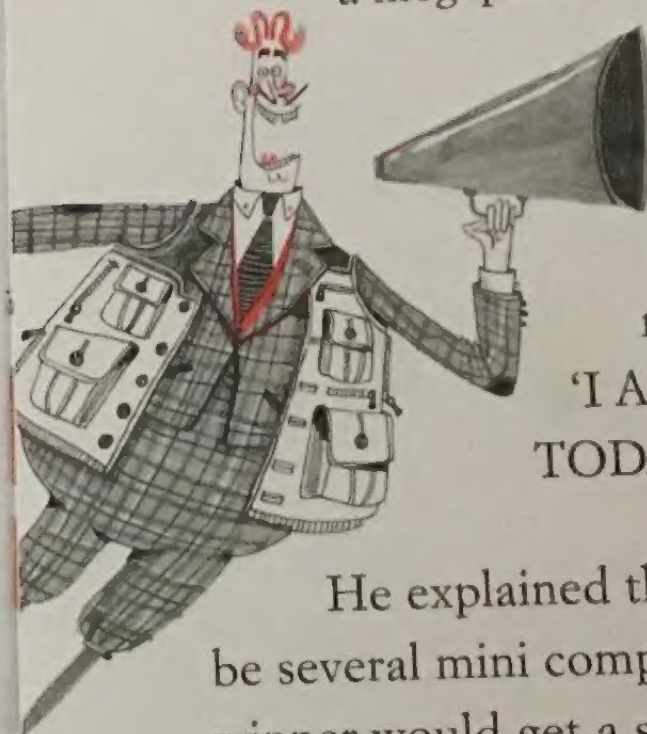


'PERFECT!' said Claude. 'But I think you need a nice, doggy sort of a name. How about Sir Dogglysock?'

'Ooh, no...' said Sir Bobblysock, admiring himself from all angles. 'I'm definitely a Butch...'

Claude couldn't disagree with that, so he and his new pet dog Butch skedaddled off to the park, where the dog show was about to begin.

In the middle of all the owners and their dogs was a bossy-looking man with a megaphone.



'MY NAME IS MR JACK RUSSELL!' the man boomed.

'I AM THE JUDGE OF TODAY'S DOG SHOW!'

He explained that there would be several mini competitions and each winner would get a shiny medal. Claude and Butch both nearly wagged their tails off with excitement.



**'RIGHT-O!'**

yelled Mr Jack Russell.

**'LET THE DOG  
SHOW BEGIN!'**

The first contest was the Best at  
Looking Like a Dog competition.  
Mr Jack Russell looked at the dogs  
very closely in turn.

Claude held his breath as the judge  
eyeballed Butch all over.

'HMMM...' the judge sniffed into the  
megaphone. 'THIS DOG'S FUR IS A  
BIT BOBBLY...'



And he awarded the medal to a  
dog called Lady Dainty-Toes.

'Never mind, Sir Bobblysock,'  
whispered Claude. 'There are  
lots of competitions left.'



Next up was the Very Fast Scamper Race. All the dogs lined up on the starting line, and Butch focused on the ribbon stretched across the finish line.

'READY!' cried Mr Jack Russell.  
Butch got ready.

'STEADY!' cried Mr Jack Russell.  
Butch got steady.

'GO!' cried Mr Jack Russell.



But just as Butch was about to get going, someone in the park opened a flask of tea and a packet of cucumber sandwiches... and Butch turned and ran towards the picnic!

A collie called Wobbles won the race.

'Never mind,' said Claude. 'There's still time to win something!'







But the next three competitions were disasters.

In the Nice Lie Down competition, Butch lay down but couldn't get back up because of his knees.

In the Best Bark contest, Butch got flustered and sang three rounds of 'Ten Big Knickers Drying on the Line' instead.

And Butch sat out of the Duck Pond Dash as he didn't want to get his hair wet.





The last competition of the day was the Obstacle Race.

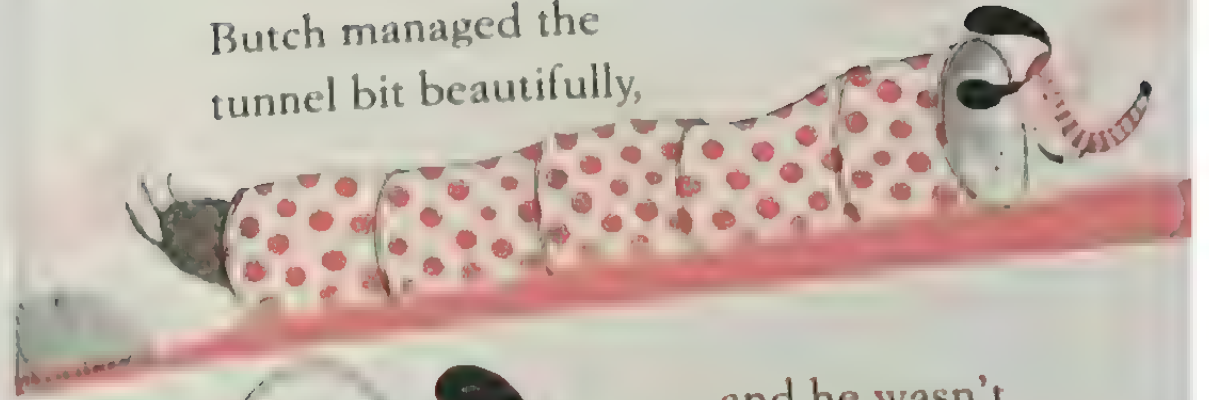
'This is our last chance to win a medal, Sir Bobblysock,' whispered Claude. Sir Bobblysock was nervous.

'Just do your best!' said Claude, and he patted his friend nicely on the head.

Mr Jack Russell blew the whistle and all the dogs got going.



Butch managed the tunnel bit beautifully,



and he wasn't bad at jumping through the hoops.



He avoided the see-saw because it made him feel funny, and instead headed straight for the wibbly-wobbly sticks.



Butch was weaving through the sticks in first place, when right at the last moment, his glasses chain got caught around a pole. Instead of crossing the finish line and winning the medal, he whizzed around in circles until Claude ran over to save him.



A bulldog called Queenie won. Sir Bobblysock sighed. He was feeling a bit droopy. There would be no medal for his knick-knack shelf or for Claude's jumper.

'Don't worry,' said Claude kindly. 'I think you did brilliantly. We can do lots of practising ready for the next dog show. Now, let's go home and have some cake. You deserve it!'





They were just by the park gates  
when they heard a woman cry:

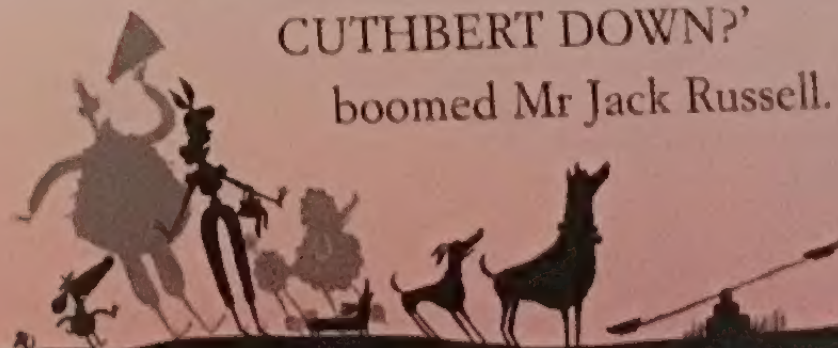
'HELP! HELP!  
MY CUTHBERT'S  
STUCK UP  
A TREE!'

Claude and Sir  
Bobblysock dashed  
back to see what  
was happening.



It turned out that  
all the other dogs had  
been having a jolly play after  
the competitions had finished.  
Lady Dainty-Toes had jumped  
on the see-saw, sending a tiny  
chihuahua flying into the branches  
of a very tall tree.

'HOWEVER WILL WE GET  
CUTHBERT DOWN?'  
boomed Mr Jack Russell.





'I will save him!' Claude cried and leapt onto one end of the see-saw. Then he told all the dogs to jump on the other end.

Claude BOINGED up into the air...

BOING!



But it was no good. He couldn't get quite high enough to reach poor Cuthbert.



'Sir Bobblys— I MEAN, BUTCH!' cried Claude. 'If you join in too, I'll be able to reach him!'

Sir Bobblysock quivered at the see-saw and all that jolloping about. But he knew he **HAD TO RESCUE POOR CUTHBERT.**







Sir Bobblysock took a deep breath. He shut his eyes. He bent down, took a flying leap... and jumped onto the see-saw with all the other dogs.

Claude BOINGED up once more and it worked! He scooped Cuthbert safely off the branch with his beret and brought him gently back to earth.

‘HOORAY!’ cried everyone.

‘THAT WAS WONDERFUL!’ Mr Jack Russell yelled. ‘I DECLARE YOU AND BUTCH THE BEST IN SHOW!’

Everyone cheered as Mr Jack Russell draped one medal around Sir Bobblysock and pinned the other to Claude’s jumper.

What a wonderful afternoon it had been!







Later that evening, Mr and Mrs Shinyshoes came home from work and found Claude in his bed in the kitchen.

‘Goodness!’ said Mrs Shinyshoes. ‘I wonder where that medal came from. Do you think Claude knows anything about it?’

Mr Shinyshoes laughed. ‘Of course not!’ he said. ‘Claude’s been fast asleep all day.’



But Claude DID know, of course – and we do too, don’t we?